

REMARKS

The foregoing amendment amends Claims 1, 7 and 9 to clarify the invention and cancels Claims 2, 10 and 15. Claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 11-14 and 16-18 are currently pending in this application, with Claim 3 being withdrawn. For the reasons set forth below, Applicants believe that the rejections should be withdrawn and that the claims are in condition for allowance.

The Cited References Do Not, Describe, Teach or Suggest the Claimed Invention

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication No. 2001-151020 to Ishizaki ("Ishizaki"), rejected Claims 7 and 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishizaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,130,514 to Oesterholt *et al.* ("Oesterholt"), and rejected Claims 2, 9, 10 and 14-18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishizaki in view of Oesterholt.

In order to anticipate a claim under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), a reference must disclose each and every element of a claim. To establish a prima facie case of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the Examiner must: (1) identify the reason why a person of ordinary skill in the art would have combined the teachings of the references; and (2) show that the references teach or suggest all of the claimed limitations.

For at least the following reasons, the Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Ishizaki and Oesterholt, do not, either singularly, or in combination, describe the claimed invention.

The foregoing amendment to Claims 1, 7 and 9 clarify that "the tip of the cylindrical portion is inclined toward the shaft in a free state." As illustrated by Figures 4 and 5, the tip of the cylindrical portion 31 is inclined toward the shaft 3 in a free state. [0043]. A comparison of Figures 4 and 5 of the present invention to Figure 4 of Oesterholt clearly illustrates that Oesterholt does not disclose or even suggest that the tip of the cylindrical portion is inclined toward the shaft in a free state, as required by Claims 1, 7 and 9. Figure 4 of Oesterholt does not illustrate the cylindrical portion in a free state. Oesterholt and Ishizaki make no mention of a tip of a cylindrical portion being inclined towards a shaft in a free

state. None of the figures or corresponding sections of the specifications of Oesterholt and Ishizaki disclose or suggest otherwise.

Furthermore, in rejecting Claim 2, the Examiner only addressed the tip of the cylindrical portion being inclined. The Examiner alleged that Figure 4 of Oesterholt describes an end portion cover having an inclined tip which extends in a first direction more inwardly than the inner cylindrical face of the shaft, wherein the cylindrical portion and the end portion form substantially an L-shape in cross section. In the present invention, as illustrated by Figures 4 and 5, the tip of the cylindrical portion is distinct from the end portion cover. Figure 4 of Oesterholt, as cited by the Examiner, simply shows an end of an inclined tip being inclined where the inclined tip extends over the end of the shaft. The Examiner did not cite any references addressing the requirement that the tip of the cylindrical portion is inclined toward the shaft in a "free state, as recited by claims 1, 7 and 9."

Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 7 and 9 are patentable over Ishizaki and Oesterholt. Additionally, Claims 5, 6, 11-14 and 16-18 depend directly or indirectly from Claims 1, 7 and 9. Therefore, for at least the same reasons as discussed above, Claims 5, 6, 11-14 and 16-18 are patentable over Ishizaki and Oesterholt.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a complete response to the Office Action identified above. This application should now be in condition for allowance, and the Applicants solicit a notice to that effect. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 11-0855. If there are any issues that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is asked to contact the undersigned at 404.685.6799.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brenda O. Holmes", written in a cursive style.

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